



EXHIBIT 6
DATE 3/8/2013
SB 306

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

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March 7, 2013

House Judiciary Committee
Montana State Senate
Helena, Montana

RE: Senate Bill 306

Dear Committee Members:

I am the Executive Director of Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS), located in Red Lodge, Montana. We provide domestic and sexual violence victim services in both Carbon and Stillwater Counties as well as provide prevention education programs to a seven-county region in south-central Montana. **I am writing in support of SB 306, a revision of the Montana Partner Family Member Assault Law.**

Removing the language, "persons of the opposite sex," is crucial in order for all victims of domestic violence—gay or straight—to obtain justice and equal protection under the law.

It has already been argued in a court of law (Lincoln County Justice Court, Department 2) that the statute as currently written defines "partners" as exclusive of homosexual partners, thus "placing more burdensome penalties of the PFMA statute (on heterosexuals), while exposing homosexual partners only to the lesser penalties of misdemeanor assault." It is only a matter of time before perpetrators of domestic violence use this omission in our statute to plead inequality under the law whenever they are charged with partner family member assault.

Our community believes that all perpetrators of domestic assault, homosexual or straight, should be held accountable and be penalized equally under Montana law. Please **vote YES on SB 306** and move it to the House floor.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me (406-446-2296 or mvorachek@dsvsmontana.org).

Best Regards

Mitzi Vorachek
Executive Director